I helped Adam out with more than just cigarettes. At least I thought I was helping him. Who knows? Perhaps the only thing I know is that I tried. I could have done more. I was limited by fear of giving offense. A terrible inhibition. When I gave him something and he chided me for it, telling me that I had to stop, I insisted that he take it, as long as he wasn't angry. I didn't mind if he was slightly embarrassed, as long as he wasn't angry. He assured me he wasn't. It wasn't even an issue.

I gave him my aquarium, with three goldfish that I'd bought in Chinatown. That was when I really started to help him out. Goldfish were supposed to be lucky.

The next day I asked him how he liked it. He frowned. He liked it. His wife loved it. As soon as she saw him bring it into the house, she insisted on going right away to the pet store for gravel, plants, and other accessories. He'd spent a hundred dollars he hadn't intended to. Now he was totally broke. I think it was the next day that I gave him a few packs for those pictures, and the next morning after that I waited for him on the steps next door, and gave him a whole carton. I wonder if that was a pattern. Maybe I was only putting him deeper in arrears.

One Friday afternoon when we were working in the kitchen I gave him fifty dollars. I laid the bill on the counter. It was pink, like the raw hamburgers we'd been cooking for lunch. I said it was for him. At first he wouldn't take it. He told me